

LOADSTAR LETTER #12

July 1994 Companion newsletter for LOADSTAR #122

"Special All about LOADSTAR Issue"

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CMD Ships Black *Things* To LOADSTAR

Barbara Burns received the mysterious package from UPS and cautiously carried it to the office of Jeff Jones. Its invoice gave no clue to what it was. Mysteriously there was no model number to identify it, and its black case seemed a little homemade. It had two mouths, and red and green blinking LEDs. It was ravenous, blinking for more and more 3.5-inch disks, and spitting them out every two minutes. It closely resembled a double-doored CMD FD-2000.

Before anyone knew what was going on, Fender called CMD and ordered another. What was it? Why, a self-contained 3.5-inch duplicator! The machine that will create all of the *LOADSTAR* 3.5-inch disks from now on. *LOADSTAR* had this unit built so that we didn't have to tie up a good C-128, a hard drive, and an *FD-2000* for copying. The duplicator isn't for sale. Says Mark "Doc Frankenstein" Fellows, the beastly is rather time-consuming to build, and there isn't a great demand for them. It'll take some coaxing to get him to build another. *CMD* has used such a device to produce its own software for over a year.

LOADSTAR's New Presenter "Near Completion," Projected For Issue 124

Well, after about ten thousand LDAs and ASLs, *LOADSTAR*'s next presenter is about done. Jeff Jones would like to unleash it on issue #123, but the master date has passed, and Fender wants it tested thoroughly.

It's written completely in machine language, so it's as fast as its predecessor. The new presenter (what we call our friendly menu system) will operate much the same as the presenter that came into use on Issue #75. It will have contact sensitive help, meaning that the help screens vary according to where you are. will play enhanced SID music, and will eventually support MIDI output so that MIDI users with interfaces can play our music through MIDI systems. Most importantly, the new presenter will support the *LOADing* of packed text files. This will help *LOADSTAR* overcome the ever-increasing problem of space constraints.

LOADSTAR And Copyrights

In the many newsletters and letters we receive, we've noticed a collective "harumph" brewing. A few *LOADSTAR* readers have written suggesting that *LOADSTAR* is somehow too protective of its programs.

We're not corporate ogres who would swoop down on the little man who uses our programs or articles. What we have done to date is contact those people who misuse (read steal) our programs and articles and tell them to stop. Usually it's a loyal customer who calls us and informs us of *LOADSTAR* piracy.

This month it was a store on the west coast that was selling hot issues of *LOADSTAR* for \$2 bucks. If these were original disks, that's fine. If these were copied disks, it's a federal offense. We have every right to make a federal case out of a federal offense. To date *LOADSTAR* have sued no one. Many of the people who have pirated us in the past thought in earnest that *LOADSTAR* was public domain -- despite the ubiquitous copyright messages that we publish. This in itself is an argument for bigger clearer copyright boxes.

We have noticed a number of newsletters reprint articles from *LOADSTAR* without our permission. This is not good. Whenever we publish a program or article, we formally ask the permission of the author and then pay them. We don't expect payment for reprints of our articles in their newsletters, but we do expect editors to ask permission.

As a rule, if an article says that I found a list or a program online, then that program is public domain, and you don't need our permission to reproduce it. We've never refused a request to use our articles and, to an extent, we'd like to have at least one article floating around in someone else's newsletter every month. It's called exposure. Rather than knocking *LOADSTAR* for doing what every publication does (post copyright notices) we ask our detractors to call for permission.

LOADSTAR's Frequency Of Publication

LOADSTAR is published monthly. Our whole year is planned out for us by Softdisk bigwigs. If we miss a master deadline, we get polite pressure. If we miss a few deadlines, we get a meeting. Ahem, one recent issue was late because it had to wait on the newsletter, which was late. If your *LOADSTAR* arrives late, it's probably our fault. We were way ahead on Issue #122, but at the time of this writing, Issue #123 is late for mastering. This is most likely due to back to back vacations and not because *LOADSTAR* is teetering on bankruptcy.

Issue Copier

Once we started our 3-inch subscription line, Issue Copier became obsolete. We used to lay out the issue in a way that wouldn't cause problems. Even then, we received tons of tech support calls about disk errors, which was one reason that we decided to start the 3.5-inch line.

If you're copying *LOADSTAR* to your 3.5-inch drive every month, you're taking upon yourself a laborious task that we've already done for you. Once we do this, we test every program and work out any bugs that may occur in copying. If you have a 3.5-inch disk drive, you should call us and switch over to a 3.5-inch subscription.

Because some 5.25-inch subscribers have expressed outrage at the thought of us publishing extra programs on the 3.5-inch issues, we won't include any extra feature program on the 3.5-inch issue, but we will publish extra text (such as stories by Jeff Jones or by you!) and perhaps the extra demo that was just

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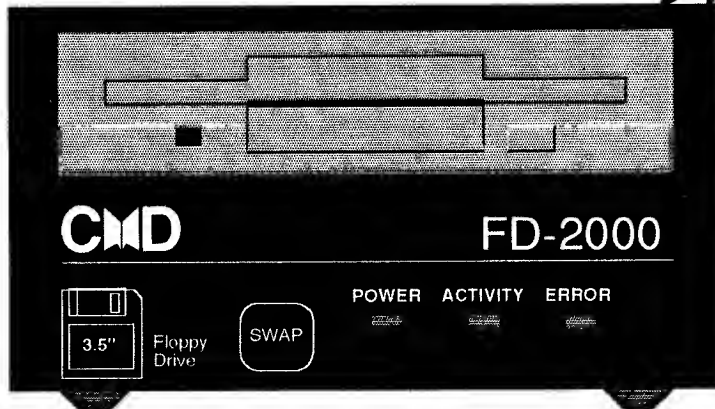
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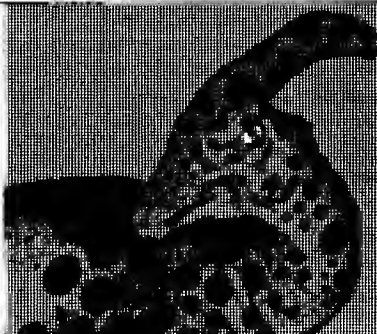


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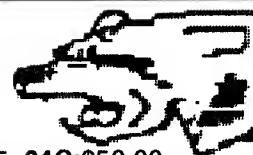
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too big to squeeze onto the 5.25-inch LOADSTAR.

LOADSTAR Public Forum

When I announced LOADSTAR Net, we immediately received a couple of disks. Now that there is room on the 3.5-inch issues to publish them, we will soon begin. The net will be a place where you can editorialize, almost at any length and rebut our editorials of us or other readers. I (Jeff) will keep this in order. All I ask is that you send your editorial on disk and mark it "Public Forum." No matter how much I like a printout, I won't have time to type it in. You can also send your editorials through Email to LOADSTAR@GENIE.GEIS.COM. If you're on GENie, the Email address is simply LOADSTAR.

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If you can be reached through the Internet and would like to be in contact with other LOADSTAR subscribers, Email me at LOADSTAR@GENIE.GEIS.COM and I'll periodically publish an updated list of LOADSTAR users in this newsletter. You can include a one-line description of yourself and your hobbies.

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Sub: MS-WOES!

A few months ago I got a 486 PS/1 as a gift. I thought that this would be a significant step up from the Commodore, but if it actually is, it's not too stable of a step. My computer came with Windows 3.1. It automatically boots every time you turn your computer on without a disk in it. I really can't stand Windows, for it's too clumsy, a definite GEOS wanna-be.

Well, my friend loaned me some stuff to try with the system. Too bad only two of the nine programs worked. I kept getting either "Not enough memory error", "EMS Memory Required", or obscure messages like "XMS Driver not found". Finally, after a few days of thinking, we had to create a boot disk, a disk to put in that you need to put all your memory drivers and drive ID and everything else on, and put the disk in when you turn it on. Even then some programs didn't work. It took me a week to get one game to work. I started trying to count my PS/1 blessings:

1. A 129 Megabyte hard drive. I thought, "I'll NEVER run out of room on this drive!!" Ha, ha, ha. Windows takes up almost half of the drive. We keep putting stuff on and taking it off in a hideous cycle. One program takes up 37 MEGABYTES and takes 1-1/2 hours to install. An average Commodore or early PC hard drive is almost as big as that program.

2. Speed. Okay, here it's both too fast and too slow. On early programs my computer is way too fast, controlling unwanted repeated characters in writing programs, and overbounded moves in games. In more recent programs, it's too slow. Jerky movements result, and the hard drive whirring every other keystroke doesn't speed things up.

3. A 16-bit sound card. Too bad some programs can't RECOGNIZE it.

4. State of the art computer as a whole. Until the Pentium chip came out soon after I got my PS/1. I now know that more recent doesn't mean better. I learned the hard way-- through hours of screaming in frustration.

Michigan Man Charged With Electronic "Stalking"

05/27/94 DEARBORN, MICHIGAN, U.S.A., 1994 MAY 27 (NB) -- A Michigan man has been charged with "stalking" in connection with electronic messages he sent a women via computer.

Andy Archambeau was charged with violating the state's anti-stalking law after he failed to comply with requests by the police and the object of his electronic affections to stop.

Archambeau, 31, allegedly sent messages complimenting her appearance, inviting her to travel to the Bahamas with him, and telling the woman he had secretly watched her leave work. That's when she became concerned and contacted police. "He makes it sound like he was being romantic. But it was very, very spooky," said the 29-year old woman, who asked not to be identified.

The couple initially met through a video dating service. They reportedly talked for hours on the phone, then met at a dating service party. The woman said she felt sparks at first. They had a lot in common, including their computers, and exchanged more than a dozen computer messages back and forth before the exchange got too heavy for the victim's liking. "He was talking about marriage and kids," she told police.

Detectives said Archambeau didn't actually threaten the woman, but did make some remarks that could possibly lead to a threat to her safety.

Archambeau was arrested and charged May 4, 1994. If convicted of the misdemeanor offense he faces a possible jail sentence of up to one year and a fine of up to \$1,000. A pre-trial hearing is scheduled for June 15th.

The American Civil Liberties Union says it's considering providing legal defense for Archambeau. "If their charges aren't thrown out then there's something for e-mail users to worry about," said Michigan ACLU chapter Director Howard Simon.

Dave Banisar, policy analyst with the Electronic Privacy Information Center, says electronic stalking should be treated the same as physical stalking. "If it's considered stalking when you send mail through the US Postal Service or over the phone, the same kind of rationale should be used for electronic networks."

Marion Groton, a spokesperson for the Michigan Attorney General, told Newsbytes this was the first case her office was aware of in the state that involved electronic stalking. She said Michigan joined 28 other states in enacting anti-stalking laws in January 1993. The Michigan statute specifically prohibits "electronic stalking."

Groton said violators convicted of a second offense could receive penalties up to five years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. (Jim Mallory/19940527/Press and reader contact: Michigan Attorney General, 517-373-1110)

Technology Section

IBM Develops Super Sensitive Disk-Drive Recording Head

06/23/94 SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A., 1994 JUN 23 (NB) -- IBM's Almaden Research Center claims it has created the world's most sensitive sensor for detecting data on magnetic hard disks. The upshot the new sensor will allow for even smaller hard disk drives with higher storage capacities, as it allows for data on hard disk drives to be stored 20 times more compactly than currently.

Called a "spin-valve" head, the new recording head sensor is five times more sensitive than the company's own best commercially available disk-drive sensor, IBM maintains. Despite the competition from flash memory storage devices, market research Frost & Sullivan claims use of magneto-resistive

heads continue to offer users speed improvements as well as better data-throughput rates and capacity at decreasing prices that will keep the magnetic storage medium dominant, especially for online storage.

Recording heads read and write to hard disk platters, spinning plates coated with a rust-like material that can hold a magnetic field. Until recently, all recording heads used electrical induction to record data, meaning an electrical current was sent through a coil to induce a magnetic field within the head that was projected into a small gap on the spinning disk. Reading the data reversed the process, as the magnetic charge was picked up, causing an electrical charge in the recording head.

To make smaller hard disk drives, the size of the data bit that holds the magnetic charge shrinks, making the charge weaker which generates a weaker electrical charge in the recording head and makes it tougher to read data. In 1991, IBM introduced magneto-resistive (MR) reading sensors. Over 3,000 times thinner than a human hair, the MR sensor is placed within or near the gap of the write element and gives a much stronger signal, allowing the recording of data in a smaller space.

IBM is the only company today producing disk drives with MR heads in volume and IBM claims that is why its drives claim the highest area density of 564 megabits per inch. This means an IBM 2.5-inch 270 megabyte (MB) hard disk drive requires a single spinning platter or disk, while competitors need two or more.

Less than six years ago, IBM said it discovered the giant magneto-resistive effect (GMR) and the "spin-value" head is the first recording head to take advantage of the GMR discovery.

"This achievement shows that we're on track to producing products by the year 2000 that will contain 10 billion bits of data per square inch of disk surface, or nearly 20 times the data density of today's most advanced disk drives," said Robert Scranton, manager of Storage Systems and Technology at Almaden. (Linda Rohrbaugh/19940622/Press Contact: Michael Ross, IBM Almaden Research Center, tel 408-927-1283, fax 408-927-3011)

Average Hard Disk 1GB In Capacity By 1996, Says Survey

06/03/94 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A., 1994 JUN 3 (NB) -- Increased demand for storage space will push computer users to seek five to 15 times more hard disk space, according to market research group Frost & Sullivan. By 1996, the average hard disk on a stand-alone desktop PC will be 1 gigabyte (GB) in size, the market research group said.

The 1993 total US personal computer/workstation storage market totaled \$8.2 billion in 1993, with nearly \$6.2 billion from hard disk drives, over \$700 million by floppy disk drives, \$600 million from tape drives, nearly \$450 million in optical disk drives and over \$100 million each by flash memory and removable disk drives.

The demands for storage media are being prompted by the obvious, such as graphics-intensive software programs and 32-bit operating systems, but are also being affected by the increasing size of user files and the expanding number of installed software programs per computer, Frost & Sullivan analyst John Kelly said.

Currently users need 125 megabytes (MB) of hard disk space for the seven to eight applications typically installed per PC, Kelly maintains. Programs are not the 4 to 5 MB in size they were even 5 years ago, said Kelly, who noted basic word processing programs require much more disk space. For example, Microsoft's Word for Windows needs 24 MB while WordPerfect for Windows requires 33 MB.

Increasing capacities in smaller form factors are also expected to continue. For example, the Kittyhawk II hard disk drive introduced by Hewlett-Packard last year offers 42.8 megabytes of storage in a 1.3-inch form factor and is aimed at the mobile computing market.

Hard disk drive storage capacities have increased by nearly 60 percent a year, with falling per-megabyte prices, and that trend is also expected to continue, Frost and Sullivan asserted. In addition, improvements in access times, data-throughput rates, and capacity (due to magnetoresistive heads) will keep magnetic hard disk drives in demand as the dominant online storage medium. In fact, by 1996 most file servers will have an average storage capacity of over 20 gigabytes.

Despite assertions on the part of some analysts that flash memory would dominate the storage market, flash memory cards, Kelly claims, will need dramatic price declines to heavily penetrate the broad portable computer markets.

Optical drives, for which market growth is only surpassed by flash memory cards, have not met predictions for broad market acceptance, but have had success in application-specific markets. Hard disk drive technology is improving at a rate that continually raises the threshold optical drives need to meet to compete, and file access times and capacities have not advanced in the optical arena as fast as expected. However, growth in the market is expected at 30 percent a year as advances in the performance and commercial availability of green and blue laser technology continue.

The number of storage units overall is expected to more than double by the year 2000, with 43.4 million units shipped in 1993 and a predicted 75.3 million units predicted to ship in the year 2000. Revenues however, will not grow as fast, with a 6.3 percent overall revenue growth rate predicted by the end of the 20th Century. While 1993 revenues overall were at \$8.31 billion, predicted year 2000 revenues will be at \$12.78 billion.

[Jeff's note: CMD actually sells a CMD HD-1000 drive. That's 1000 megabytes -- a gigabyte.] (Linda Rohrbaugh/19940602/Press Contact: Amy Amell, Frost & Sullivan, tel 415-961-9000, fax 415-961-5042)

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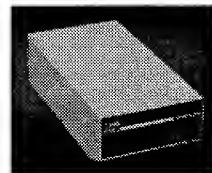
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